

Efficiency Committee Minutes December 19, 2011

NEWMARKET SCHOOL/TOWN EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEWMARKET
186 MAIN STREET
NEWMARKET, NH 03857
December 19, 2011
DRAFT MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Bob Coffey, Linda Mantegani, Jennifer Donahue, Todd Berry, Mike Labranche, Jim Hayes, Cliff Chase, Ed Wojnowski, Joan Liporto, and Brian Hart.

Absent: Eric Botterman, Larry Pickering,

Superintendent Jim Hayes

Also present were Don Jutton and Mike Branley from MRI and Town Councilor Al Zink.

CALL TO ORDER: Bob called the meeting to Order at 6:00 P.M.

A few members stated that they did not receive the minutes so approval of minutes was delayed until next meeting.

Presentation by the chair: Bob passed out an analysis of his property taxes paid since 1999. He broke down county, town, school, and state to show where increases were specifically. He saw three options to counter the steady increase of taxes: do nothing, tactic approach (small dollars), strategic approach (change the mindset). Bob thinks the Committee should try to focus on the strategic approach. Bob passes around an organizational chart- he sees the Committee as representing the "Community of Newmarket," broken down into "departments" of School, Town, and Newmarket Services. Bob outlined the current lack of "financial management" as he sees it, on both the School and Town side (as opposed to accounting). He highlighted that management/operational questions do not mean that something is not doable (such as shared payroll between the School and the Town). He thinks the Committee is in agreement to try to use resources more efficiently and towards a better use/outcome.

Linda is curious what Bob's analysis would look like for other towns.

Don said that comparison can be done, however all communities are different in terms of what they offer for services, tax rate, other properties in the community, etc. It is important to think about what the realistic "tax cap" is that people can afford to pay. He said as he sees it Newmarket cannot afford the liabilities it has coming down the pike that Bob identified (Wastewater treatment, new school(s), etc.

Bob said he thinks the Committee needs to look at regionalization eventually, however "easy" wins at home are a good way to start.

Brian thinks looking at regionalization early is critical, even if it is just to send out feelers in case a good opportunity presents itself. He doesn't want good opportunities to be missed because we were waiting to look at regionalization.

Bob agreed and said that regionalization may be a good subcommittee to create.

Don distributed the survey of the Committee Members that MRI conducted. He said some of "the priority questions" can be broken down further if desired. The Committee really needs to try to narrow down tactical and strategic priorities to focus

the group.

Cliff said that maybe the best way to go for the Committee would be to have a stake in the ground as a long term goal and then identify easier solutions as the Committee moves forward. Cliff said perhaps that was the best rationale is for two committees, one focusing on short term savings and more long term goal setting.

Brian said subcommittees focusing on tactics was more desirable than two totally autonomous committees.

Bob stated that finance may be a good area to look at now with the current opening on the Town side. The Committee could explore whether it makes sense to consolidate or not and report to the Town Council.

Cliff emphasized that the Committee only has the authority to make recommendations and then try to sell it to the different sides.

Mike said he agreed, the main role of the Committee is to brainstorm and make recommendations. That way issues can be "checked off" the list.

Don said that depending on the vote tomorrow, the Town and School may have a joint School/Town Meeting to prepare for. Is preparing for this meeting a role of the Community? It was clarified that the School and Town will not try to have a joint Meeting this year

Bob said he sees four subcommittees: regionalization, "What Newmarket looks like in 5 years," tactics, & accounting/finance.

Mike said he sees his work picking up and is not sure that he can take on the load of subcommittees at this time. Bob thinks even if Mike stays on more as a Sounding Board for ideas that would still be valuable. Brian thinks it should be mandatory that members serve on a subcommittee.

Jim says he sees the staff members on the Committee as a more support role because their time may get too consumed by assisting with all of the topics.

Regionalization subcommittee: Brian (Chair), Todd, Eric.

Accounting Finance subcommittee: Jennifer (Chair), Joan, Ed, Bob.

Tactics: Linda (Chair), Larry.

5-year vision: Cliff (Chair), Jim, Bob.

Bob said it would be valuable to bring in a few more people that had expressed an interest previously.

Al asked about innovative ways to attract new voices and a few were identified. Al asked about what if employees asked about joining? Bob said he thought it should be encouraged as they often best know how things operate.

Brian reminded that the community needs the School Board and Town Council to come together and identify priorities, specifically in terms of high price capital.

There was a discussion regarding the Right to Know Law applied to Subcommittees, Don and Mike B. will research and

report back.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: Next meeting set for January 23rd at 6:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT: Brian Made the Motion to Adjourn. Linda Seconded the Motion.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Bob adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Respectfully Submitted by Mike